



# Academy of International Studies Elementary School

## Assessment Policy



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# Introduction

The purpose of this document is to present:

- An understanding of all that encompasses assessment at Academy of International Studies Elementary
- A common definition for the terms associated with assessment, evaluation and reporting
- Guidelines and procedures that faculty need to follow in relation to assessment, evaluation and reporting

The contents of this document are based on thorough educational research, best practice and information obtained from assessment workshops given by the International Baccalaureate and from shared collaborative meetings, both vertically and horizontally, focused on our assessment practices and procedures. This document provides the faculty of Academy of International Studies Elementary with clear guidelines related to effective assessment and reporting practices focused on student learning.

In addition it fulfills standards and practices of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IBPYP).

# Academy of International Studies Assessment Philosophy

At the Academy of International Studies, we believe that assessment should guide instruction in order to meet the needs of all learners. By assessing both the process and the product we gain insight into the individual learner. Assessment allows teachers, staff, parents, and students to reflect on:

- Acquisition of knowledge (New Learning)
- Understanding of concepts
- Mastery of skills
- Development of attributes
- Decision to take responsible action

This assessment philosophy is fulfilled through our Academy of International Studies Elementary mission and vision. Our vision states, "Demanding Equity, Fostering Inquiry, Empowering Excellence for all." We aim to design and implement equitable and effective assessments that allow students to demonstrate a range of knowledge, conceptual understanding and skills while expressing different viewpoints and interpretations. Inquiry is our approach to instruction. Students develop meaning from their learning experiences. Our assessments use a variety of learning styles, multiple intelligences, and abilities to express their understanding. This provides an opportunity for students to share their learning in a meaningful way. At Academy of International Studies Elementary, we are committed to excellence. Our assessments are a measure of excellence.

Students demonstrate the traits of the Learner Profile through our assessments by:

- partnering with teachers to design their learning goals and success criteria (**Thinker, Communicator**)
- being able to self-assess and discuss their progress towards achieving learning goals (**Reflective**)
- selecting evidence, such as samples of their learning, that best demonstrate the intended learning goals (**Balanced, Thinker, Reflective**)
- developing the metacognitive skills to reflect on their learning and to plan next steps (**Reflective**)
- drawing on feedback and multiple strategies to adjust their learning and identify where and when to make improvements. (**Thinker, Open-minded**)



**Academy of International Studies Elementary Mission Statement:** Academy of International Studies Elementary aims to develop internationally minded global citizens who take action for a better, more peaceful world. We are committed to providing equity, excellence, and success for all through high quality educational services.

## Purpose for Assessment: What and why do we assess?

*The PYP focuses on the heart as well as the mind and addresses social, physical, emotional and cultural needs in addition to those considered to be more academic. The traditional subject areas are valued, with an extra emphasis on the balance between the acquisition of essential knowledge and skills and the search for the meaning of, and understanding about, the world. The programme provides the opportunity for learners to construct meaning, principally through concept-driven inquiry. The threads of students' learning are brought together in the transdisciplinary programme of inquiry, which in turn allows them to make connections with life outside the school. (Assessment Principles and Practices, 10/2020. IB PYP documentation)*

### What We Assess

Through the IB PYP Programme of Inquiry, Academy of International Studies Elementary teachers strive to provide the opportunity for learners to construct meaning primarily through inquiry. This is accomplished by emphasizing the connections between subject-specific knowledge and transdisciplinary skills and themes. The transdisciplinary themes--Who We Are, Where We Are in Place and Time, How We Express Ourselves, How the World Works, How We Organize Ourselves, and Sharing the Planet--provide a focus for inquiry, while literacy and numeracy provide the tools. Feedback should be given on student progress and performance in each of these areas.

Additionally, feedback is provided on the attributes listed in the PYP Learner Profile: Inquirer, Communicator, Thinker, Risk-Taker, Knowledgeable, Principled, Caring, Open-Minded, Balanced, and Reflective. These learner profile attributes help our students develop their international-mindedness. International-mindedness is a multifaceted concept that captures a way of thinking, being and acting characterized by an openness to the world and a recognition of our deep interconnectedness to others. It is at the centre of both the culture and curriculum in IB World Schools—it is the hub that connects the different elements of an IB education. (What is an IB education, 2020.)

At the Academy of International Studies Elementary, we assess performance and progress in each of the following subject areas: English language arts, Spanish, math, science, social studies, physical education, art, music, media literacy, and social skills. We incorporate student attitudes and learner profile attributes into everyday learning. We assess central ideas and attempt to incorporate the CREC objectives and assessments when they are related to enduring understandings.

## Why We Assess

*The purpose of assessment is to inform learning and teaching. It involves the gathering and analysis of information about student learning to inform teaching practice. It identifies what students know, understand and can do at different stages in the learning process.*

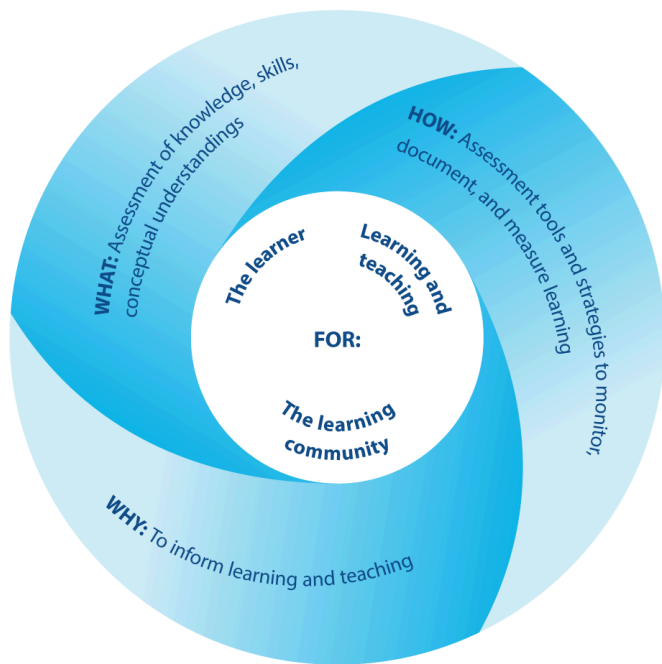
*Effective assessment that achieves this purpose provides valuable information to understand what constitutes learning and how to support it, and is meaningful to all members of the learning community.*

*Students become effective, self-regulated learners when they are actively engaged in assessment and act on constructive feedback. This helps them reflect on their progress, set goals for their learning and engages them in making decisions about what they need to do to achieve these goals.*

*Teachers become more effective when they continually learn about what students know and can do. They reflect on their practice, adjust their teaching based on data, and offer timely, specific and well-considered feedback to better support learning.*

*Parents and legal guardians become more informed when they understand the learning goals their child is working towards, and the progress their child is making. They extend their child's understanding and development of skills when they support learning. They contribute to their child's joy of learning and growth as a successful learner through sharing insights with the learning community.*

*Schools become more impactful learning communities when they use assessment as a tool to evaluate the depth of their curriculum and the effectiveness of their teaching. They make decisions about targeting resources and support to the most pressing priorities and professional development needs. (Assessment in the Primary Years Programme, April 2020. © International Baccalaureate Organization)*



Assessment is an essential part of the instructional cycle. It provides information about student learning and development, as well as a framework for planning, self-reflection, and collaboration.

Children and teachers should be actively engaged in assessing student progress and development of critical thinking and self-evaluation skills. Student self-assessment is a key component of an IB program. Teachers also evaluate the efficacy of the program.

Figure AS01 Integrating assessment, Assessment in the Primary Years Programme, April 2020)

Students' learning is promoted through:

- Assessing prior knowledge and experience
- Differentiating instruction to meet individual needs
- Engaging learners in reflection to determine strengths and areas for improvement to set goals
- Providing specific feedback for students
- Expanding student learning opportunities
- Building a profile of children's understanding

Information about student learning is provided through

- Examples of student work or performances
- Statistics relating to benchmarks and/or rubrics or test scores
- Test results

Program evaluation uses a variety of student assessments to:

- Assess the levels of students' current knowledge and experience before embarking on new learning
- Assess new learning
- Guide teacher planning and presentation
- Assess student performance relative to national, state, and local standards as well as PYP expectations as listed in the scope and sequence
- Focus on closing the achievement gap

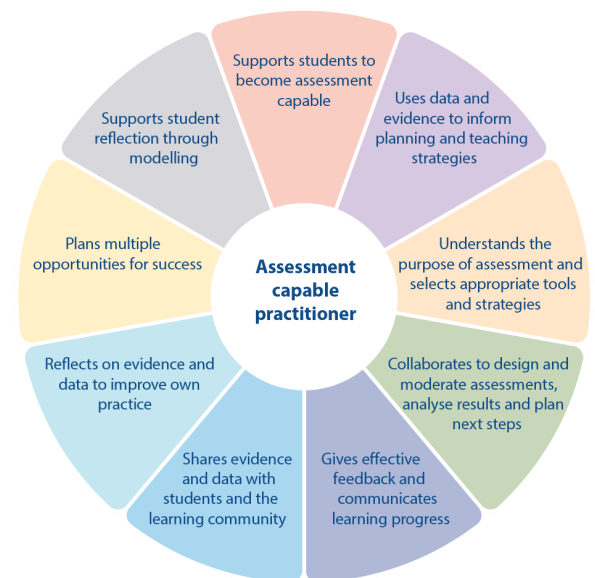
## Rights and Responsibilities

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning at AISE. We view assessment as an opportunity for all stakeholders to understand where they are in their progression of learning.

The use of rubrics is one way we help students assess themselves as learners. Rubrics are also used to guide teachers in their planning for learning engagements in addition to formal assessments. With this knowledge and understanding, they're empowered to achieve their goals. Rubrics are also a tool that parents can access in order to support their child's learning.

As a team of supporters, we have rights and responsibilities.

- Students have the right to choose while developing and demonstrating their agency
- Teachers have the responsibility to provide options for voice, choice, and student ownership
- Parents and families have the right to be informed



# Principles of Assessment: What are the characteristics of effective assessments?

Assessment occurs every day in some format. At Academy of International Studies Elementary, a variety of assessments demonstrate our belief that children learn in different ways, at different rates, and at different times. The result of assessment is considered a critical element that influences teacher decision-making and guides student learning.

## Criteria for Effective Assessments

All types of assessment provide information to the student, the teacher, and the family. There are criteria for all stakeholders that make the assessment effective. At Academy of International Studies Elementary, we have created a set of expectations for our assessments so they meet the needs of students, teachers, and families.

Effective assessments for students include the opportunity to:

- Share their learning and understanding with others
- Know and understand the criteria for producing a quality product or performance
- Participate in reflection, self- and peer- assessment

Effective assessments allow teachers to:

- Inform every stage of the teaching and learning process
- Develop criteria for producing a quality product or performance
- Provide evidence that can be reported and understood by the whole school community

Effective assessments allow families to:

- See evidence of student learning and development
- Develop an understanding of the student's progress
- Provide opportunities to support and celebrate student learning

*(Making the PYP happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education, p. 46, 2020).*

## Characteristics of Effective Assessments

Highly effective assessment shares some key characteristics (Adapted from Clarke 2012).

- **Authentic:** It supports making connections to the real world to promote student engagement.
- **Clear and specific:** This includes desired learning goals, success criteria and the process.
- **Varied:** It uses a wider range of tools and strategies that are fit for purpose.
- **Developmental:** It focuses on an individual student's progress rather than their performance in relation to others.
- **Collaborative:** It engages both teachers and students in the assessment development and evaluation process.
- **Interactive:** Assessment encompasses ongoing and iterative dialogues about learning.
- **Feedback to feedforward:** It provides feedback on current learning to inform what is needed to support future learning (Hattie, Timperley 2007). (Assessment in the PYP, 2019)

# Assessment Practice: How do we assess?

## Types of Assessments

### Pre-Assessment

Pre-assessment occurs before beginning new learning to understand prior knowledge and experiences. Pre-assessment allows teachers and students insight into where learning can begin.

### Self Assessment

Self-assessment involves students reviewing and evaluating their knowledge, conceptual understandings and skills. It then leads to students monitoring and adjusting their behavior and planning, making corrections and implementing improvements in their learning. Self-adjusters use the feedback they are given to modify and improve their learning. Self-adjusting therefore requires both thought and action and supports students' self-efficacy. Assessment is a powerful tool to support students in becoming self-adjusting learners. As they reflect on their progress and set goals for future learning, they may consider the following questions.

- What do I need to know?
- What knowledge and skills do I need to develop in order to answer my questions?
- What steps do I need to take to ensure that my learning exemplifies quality?
- What further possibilities do I see?
- How do I incorporate feedback to achieve my learning goals?

### Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is woven into the daily learning process and provides teachers and students with information about how learning is developing, it aides students and teachers in planning the next stage of learning. *Formative assessment aims to promote learning by giving regular and frequent feedback. This helps learners to improve knowledge and understanding, to foster enthusiasm for learning, to engage in thoughtful reflection, to develop the capacity for self-assessment, and to recognize the criteria for success. (IBO 2009)*

### Summative Assessment

Summative assessment occurs at the end of a learning cycle, students are given the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned by applying their knowledge in new and authentic contexts.

### Exhibition as Summative Assessment

This occurs during the last trimester of fifth grade and provides a culminating learning experience for the IB Primary Years Programme. Key purposes of the exhibition include:

- Allowing students participate in collaborative inquiry that demonstrates independence and responsibility for their learning
- Enabling students to synthesize and apply learning from previous years and reflect on the PYP journey
- The demonstration of students taking action as a result of learning
- Uniting students, teachers, parents, and other members of the school community in a collaborative experience that incorporates the essential elements of the PYP

## Standardized Testing

A standardized test is administered under controlled conditions that specify where, when, how, and for how long children respond to the questions. In standardized tests, the questions, conditions for administering, scoring procedures, and interpretations are consistent. A well designed standardized test provides an assessment of an individual's mastery of a domain of knowledge or skill. (e.g. Smarter Balanced, DIBELS, LASlinks)

## Assessment Strategies

Assessment in the classroom answers the question, "How will we know what we have learned?"; assessment at Academy of International Studies Elementary includes but is not limited to:

Assessment strategies and tools					
Assessment tools \ Assessment strategies	Rubrics	Exemplars	Checklists	Anecdotal records	Continuums
Observations	✓		✓	✓	✓
Performance assessments	✓	✓		✓	✓
Process-focused assessments	✓		✓	✓	✓
Selected responses		✓	✓		✓
Open-ended tasks	✓	✓		✓	✓

Figure 15

- **Observations:** All students are observed regularly with a focus on the individual, the small group, and/or the whole class.
- **Performance Assessments:** Students are presented with a task that represents the kind of challenges that adults face in the world beyond the classroom. It requires using a repertoire of knowledge and skills to accomplish a goal or solve an open-ended problem. In addition, it entails the thoughtful application of knowledge rather than recalling facts. It has an identified purpose or audience, involves a realistic scenario, it has an established criteria and requires developing an authentic product or performance
- **Transdisciplinary Skills Assessments (research, thinking, communication, self-management and social skills):** The focus is on the process and skill application rather than on the product. These skills are regularly observed in real contexts using checklists, narrative notes, and inventories.

- **Open-Ended Assessments:** Students are presented with a challenge and asked to provide an original response.
- **Tests/Quizzes:** These single-occasion assessments provide a snapshot of students' specific knowledge.
- **Portfolios:** An ongoing, purposeful collection is composed of selected student work and designed to demonstrate growth, and creativity. *Portfolios enable students to reflect with teachers, parents, and peers in order to identify their strengths and growth as well as areas for improvement, and then set individual goals and establish teaching and learning plans.* (Making the PYP Happen, January 2009. IB0)
  - [Academy of International Studies Elementary agreements for Digital Portfolios](#)

## How We Report on Assessment

### Conferences

The purpose of conferences is to share information about goals and progress between teachers, students, parents/guardians. Conferences may be formal or informal.

- **Teacher/student** conferences occur frequently to provide feedback to students to enable reflection on their work and further refine and develop their skills
- **Teacher/parent/guardian** conferences provide parents/guardians with information about a student's progress, development, and needs.
- **Student-Led** conferences involve the parent, teacher, and student. The student is responsible for leading the conference and sharing their learning process with their parents. The student will share their self-assessment and reflections during the conference. These include items from all content areas and the learner profile.

### Report Cards

Report cards are sent home three times a year. Approaches to learning and the learner profile are reflected in the comments that teachers write on every report card. We strive to communicate, share, and reflect on student learning at the end of each unit.

## Implementation of the Assessment Policy

At Academy of International Studies Elementary, we commit to the agreements that are established in this assessment policy. In addition, we will annually review the agreements and consider revisions. Other actions we will take to support the implementation of the assessment policy are:

- To review portfolio procedures and expectations at the start of each school year
- To establish reflection routines with students for ongoing, meaningful feedback
- To model and share best practices for collection of student work and other evidence
- To use the assessment policy tools and strategies when designing formative and summative assessments

## Implications of Policy and Future Research

Upon publishing this policy, Academy of International Studies Elementary will commit to:

- Continued research into the most effective combinations of instructional models and assessments that result in improved student learning.
- Identifying types of professional development and supporting activities that best enable teachers to understand and implement different types of performance assessments.
- Identifying trends (strengths and areas in need of development) in our curriculum through analyzing assessment data.
- Identifying how we best prepare students for external standardized performance assessments.

## Collaborative Process leading to revisions

This policy will be reviewed annually by the school faculty and revised on a three-year cycle based on the date of publication. During the revision process all faculty members will use guiding questions to establish agreements on assessment:

- How should we structure assessment?
- How often should we assess?
- What do we assess?
- Who is responsible for assessment and how?
- How should assessment information be recorded?
- How should assessment information be analyzed and reported?
- How will assessment information be reported to students and parents?
- Who will have access to assessment information and where will it be located?

*(Making the PYP happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education, p 55. 2020)*

Group decisions will be made and reflected within the assessment policy. The updated assessment policy will be published on our website and in the parent handbook. Additionally, it will be shared and referenced during annual in-take conferences and open house events. In this way we can ensure that the school community is aware of the assessment policy.

## Works Cited

- International Baccalaureate Organization, *IBPYP Assessment Handbook*, Geneva, Switzerland. 2001
- International Baccalaureate Organization, *Making the PYP Happen*, Geneva, Switzerland. 2009
- International Baccalaureate Organization, *Guidelines for Developing a School Assessment Policy in the Diploma Programme*, Geneva, Switzerland. 2010
- International Baccalaureate Organization, *Making the PYP happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education*, Geneva, Switzerland. 2020.
- International Baccalaureate Organization, *Assessment in the Primary Years Programme*, Geneva, Switzerland. 2019.

**We also gathered information from the following IB PYP school assessment policies:**

- Wade King Elementary
- Charter Oak International Academy
- The International School at Dundee
- The English School
- Frank C. Martin International
- Branksome Hall
- Whitby School

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